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MUSIC IN THE HOUSE

JOHN HULLAH.

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MUSIC IN THE HOUSE.

HULLAH.

From a Picture by Schalken in the National Gallery, London.

MUSIC IN THE HOUSE.

BY

JOHN HULLAH, LL.D.

"Le beau est aussi utile que l'utile,—plus peut-être."
VICTOR HUGG.

PHILADELPHIA:
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MUSIC IN THE HOUSE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

IN no country perhaps is more music to be heard at this present time than in our own,—out of "the house." Never certainly have there been presented to us opportunities so frequent or so favourable of making acquaintance, through the ear or the eye—and through both at such moderate cost—with the productions of the best masters of the oratorio, the opera, the orchestral symphony, and even of chamber-music, vocal as well as instrumental. Viewed through the advertising columns of the daily and weekly press, we might seem to be the most musical people under the sun. Viewed through the records of our domestic life, however, our condition presents itself somewhat differently.

True, music is to be heard, often and well heard, in the English house; but that she has yet made herself a place there, that she is yet welcomed to it as an "own familiar friend" should be, is a statement to be made hesitatingly, and accepted with a good deal of qualification. A vast amount of the music to which I began by alluding is of course only to be sought in public places, and from public performers. For a hearing of the oratorio, the opera, the orchestral symphony, this out-of-door search is inevitable. Few even of our noblest dwellings have rooms wherein the executants of such works could be accommodated, or the perfect execution of them appreciated. But, given competent performers, the instrumental concerted piece, the pianoforte solo, the song not requiring orchestral accompaniment, can be better heard, and is likely to be better understood, in a drawing-room of average capacity than in a modern "hall," calculated to give effect to the combined efforts of three or four hundred performers. Those who have only "assisted at" the interpretation of an instrumental quartet—albeit in the company of the quietest crowd—by artists only to be recognized by the eye through a telescope, have little idea of the pleasure the same music and the same, nay, inferior, musicians can give to a few religiously silent "assistants;" of the bond of

sympathy at once established between doers and hearers so much more favourably placed in relation to one another; of the fervour communicated to the one by the admiration of the other—unexpressed though this be, save through a breath deeper than usual, or a word incomplete in its utterance though irrepressible in its inception; of the delight afforded by a peep at the notes at some critical moment of their interpretation, and by the interchange of ideas, when the relaxation of bow-arms has set the tongues both of doers and hearers free.

The business before us is to multiply reunions like these—to get music into the house; more precisely, into houses wherein she is as yet a stranger, or only an occasional guest of whom neither host nor hostess quite know how to dispose. And this demands a little method.

The particular music, or kind of music to the consideration of which our subject limits us, is that which requires for its production the co-operation generally of small numbers, and never of greater than can be accommodated and heard in a moderate-sized dwelling-room. Like all music, it is purely vocal, purely instrumental, or both. Over and above these classifications it admits of another; it may be regarded as music for the performer, music for the hearer, and music for both. Most music belongs, or should belong, to the third

of these three classes ; but the first is a larger one than it is commonly believed to be. For, I should be disposed to assign to it all the secular music of the sixteenth century—of, to us, the "Old Masters." What the quantity of this is, may be judged from the fact that a single composer of this epoch, Luca Marenzio, published nine *collections* of "madrigals" in one city, Venice, alone; and that his single compositions of this kind are said to exceed a thousand in number. It is certain that much of this music, executed by a well proportioned choir of beautiful and cultivated voices, is able to give pleasure even to unlearned hearers. But such choirs are not often to be met with; nor would such delicate handling of such music, nor indeed any handling with such a view, be in the least what its composers ever contemplated. It is, I repeat, *performers,'* as contra-distinguished from *hearers,'* music. A passage from a writer of this epoch will interpret my meaning better perhaps than a longer one of my own. Morley opens his "Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke: set downe in the form of a dialogue" 1597) thus :—

"*Polymathes.* Stay, brother Philomathes: what haste? whither go you so fast?

"*Philomathes.* To seek out an old friend of mine.

"*Pol.* But before you goe, I pray you repeate some of the discourses which you had yesternight at Master Sophobulus his banket: for commonly he is not without wise and learned guests.

"*Phi.* It is true, indeede. And yesternight there were a number of excellent schollers, both gentlemen and others; but all the propose, which then was discoursed upon, was musicke.

"*Pol.* I trust you were contented to suffer others to speake of that matter.

"*Phi.* I would that had beene the worst: for I was compelled to discover mine own ignorance, and confesse that I knew nothing at all in it.

"*Pol.* How so?

"*Phi.* Among the rest of the guests by chance, Master Aphron came thither also, who falling to discourse of musicke, was in an argument so quickly taken up and hotly pursued by Eudoxus and Calergus, two kinsmen of Sophobulus, as in his owne act he was overthrowen: but he still sticking in his opinion, the two gentlemen requested me to examine his reasons, and confute them. But I refusing, and pretending ignorance, the whole company condemned me of discurtesie, being fully persuaded, that I had been as skilfull in that art, as they took me to be learned in others. But supper being ended, and musicke bookes (according to the custome) being brought to

table, the mistresse of the house presented me with a part, earnestly requesting me to sing; but when, after many excuses, I protested unfainedly that I could not, every one began to wonder. Yea, some whispered to others, demanding how I was brought up; so that upon shame of mine ignorance, I goe now to seeke out mine old friend, Master Gnorimus, to make myselfe his scholler."

This passage, which has been frequently quoted for what it *shows*—the large cultivation of musical skill among ladies and gentlemen in the writer's time—is hardly less worth quoting for what it *implies* by omission. It contains not a word about an audience for the music described. On the contrary, the presence of a non-performing guest is referred to with astonishment and disapproval. "Supper being ended, and the musicke books (according to the custome) being brought to table, the mistresse of the house presents 'the stranger' with a part, earnestly requesting him to sing." Singing, with the company described, was the customary sequence of supping, and it is plain that a guest would have been as little expected to sit and listen silently to the former, as to sit and watch hungrily the latter.

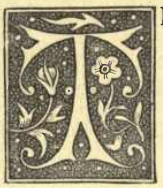
All music, good of its kind and fairly well-executed, is no doubt "able to give pleasure;" but we can only thoroughly appreciate, only get the

utmost enjoyment out of, that music which we can or could take part in. It may be accepted as an axiom, that no musical performance is so delightful as that to the production of which we ourselves contribute. What a plea for "music in the house"!

The bulk of this music therefore should be of a kind that will employ the largest number of performers. This will, of necessity, be vocal music; for there are, and always will be, more singers in the world than players. It will also be choral music; that of which each individual part may employ more than one vocalist. Vocal music, choral or other, may be with or without instrumental accompaniment. Let us first consider the more ancient kind, the latter.

CHAPTER II.

UNACCOMPANIED VOCAL MUSIC.



HE quantity of this music extant, in manuscript as well as in print, is enormous—practically, indeed, inexhaustible. The epochs of its most successful production are two: the latter part of the sixteenth century and our own time. In the former its independence of instrumental accompaniment was matter of necessity; in the latter it has been matter of choice. Not that vocal performance during the earlier epoch was always unaided by instrumental. The "chest of viols" common to the old house, was often drawn upon for the doubling of weak, and the supplementing of missing vocal parts. But independent accompaniment, having an interest and a beauty of its own, only begins at a somewhat later time.

The music of the Old Masters, like our own, is

sacred and secular; the latter class having become perhaps the more abundant towards the close of the sixteenth century. It lies, in respect to the present generation, under the disadvantage of another "tonality." The Old Masters speak to us in a dialect, if not in a language, different from our own. Forms of expression common to contemporary music—eminently what is called the "perfect cadence"[1]—if not altogether absent from, are hesitatingly and tentatively employed in, "ancient music." Modulation too, in our sense, is comparatively unknown to it. Change of "mode," something analogous to our passage from the major to the minor, is frequent, but change of "key" would obviously have been impossible in music wholly wanting in the combinations which with us characterize a key—enable us to distinguish one key from another. These peculiarities render, and are likely always to render, a taste for the music in which they are found what is called an "acquired taste." To the palate habituated to strong drinks, Château La Rose is sour and Chambertin thin. To the ear hitherto exclusively trained on the incisive combinations and the determined rhythms of our music, much of the music of our ancestors must at first seem vague, pointless,

[1] The resolution of the discord of the dominant seventh on the tonic.

inexpressive, and even ugly. No persuasion will convince those who feel that it deserves these epithets that it does not. Words are of no avail: but action is not. Let those who, not altogether wanting in intelligent curiosity, would like to know why, after Carissimi, Scarlatti, Bach and Handel, Haydn and Mozart, Beethoven, Spohr, Schubert, Mendelssohn and Schumann have severally run their courses, nay, even in the full tide of success of the most eloquent of musical heresiarchs, Palestrina is still not merely a name, but a living voice whose call to the worship of the true and beautiful, as he understood them, is still not unheeded; let such, I say, set themselves earnestly to the work of understanding the idiom in which that great genius, his contemporaries and immediate successors, spoke to the world,—best done by the careful study, and at least approximately perfect interpretation, of their works. This study and interpretation should at first be directed to the most recent of these Old Masters, those of the last quarter of the sixteenth and the first of the seventeenth centuries. Though still widely different from, they are somewhat more akin to, those with whose music we are all certain to be most familiar. The Old Masters are for the most part Belgians, Italians, or Englishmen. The German as a distinct school is essentially modern. The ancient Belgian, or *Gallo*-Belgian, school began

and came to an end sooner than the Italian or the English. I should therefore recommend that the study of it be put latest, in order of time, with perhaps the exception of the works of one of its *alumni*, Roland de Lattre, better known by his Italianized name, Orlando di Lasso, a musician who, to judge only by internal evidence, might have lived and written a quarter of a century later than he is known to have done. The Italian school should be approached first.

To what I have called "performers' music" the Italians are the earliest as the latest, the most abundant as the most successful, contributors. Italy has been for ages and still is pre-eminently the land of *Song;* and the musicians of Italy and those who have sought and profited by their instruction and example, Handel and Mozart, for instance, have been and still are, above all other musicians, skilled in the *tessitura* of vocal parts; *i.e.* in the art of writing passages which are not only agreeable to the ear but becoming to the voice. The study and practice of the early Italian music might begin with some of the *motetti*[1] of Giovanni Croce (d. 1609), along with the *villanelle* of Gastoldi (d. 1605), and the *madrigali* of Luca Marenzio (d. 1590). A few specimens of these and some other

[1] English adaptations of a number of these were printed some years since by the *Motet Society*.

contemporary compositions will serve as introductions to those of the master who gave his name to his age, Giovanni Pier Luigi da Palestrina. The character of many of these will be found to have little relation to the dates of their production. Palestrina presents to us the somewhat unusual combination of a genius at once inventive and conservative. His latest works afford no evidence of change, or desire for change of style; his earliest show that he had ascertained what could be done within the limits of that style. The mass (for six voices), "Tu es Petrus,"[1] may be cited as a typical example of his powers—a work which, for the determinateness of its rhythm and the purity of its harmony, might belong to the nineteenth century, for the childlike simplicity and the manly fervour of its faith, to the thirteenth.

With the English contemporaries of the latest of these great masters it might be best to make acquaintance through Orlando Gibbons, the last of *our* ancients; and then pass (still backwards in order of time) to Wilbye, Dowland, Bennett, Morley, and the greater—for their harps were

[1] Printed, *for the first time*, a few years since, at Ratisbon, in the *Musica Divina*, originally *edited by Dr. Proske*—the most copious, varied, and least expensive collection of specimens of the Old Masters which has come under my notice. It is published in separate parts as well as in score. The *Second Series, edited by Schrems*, begun in 1865, has not, it is to be feared, been continued.

always "strung with heavenly strings" — Bird, Farrant and Tallis.[1]

Whatever be the skill of those who, hitherto practised only in contemporary music, *first* attempt, and however earnestly, to realise that of the sixteenth century, one thing is all but certain,—they will not like it. And this for two reasons; one, that they will at first perform it unintelligently and therefore imperfectly; the other, that, when its meaning begins to dawn upon them, they will inevitably compare it with the music they know best, that of their own time. This procedure, the absurdity of which, in reference to what meets the eye, is obvious, is quite common in reference to what is addressed to the ear. Yet, to measure Botticelli by Leonardo da Vinci, or Dryden by Shelley, would show no more ignorance or unreasonableness than to measure Palestrina by Mozart, or Gibbons by Beethoven. The aims, means, modes of working and forms of expression of the old masters of music, as of the other arts, were, in reference to those of the new, "wide as the poles asunder." But, I repeat, words alone will not make converts to those old masters, nor prove to the modern amateur to what an extent his

[1] Fine specimens of the sacred music of these composers are to be found in Boyce's *Cathedral Music*, of the secular in the *Triumphs of Oriana*, and many more recent and accessible collections.

pleasure in music is capable of enlargement, through an acquaintance—nay, more than an acquaintance, intimacy—with their works. He must study these till he understands them—feels them. To do this is to delight in them. Two considerations should encourage him to do this.

(1.) That this ancient music is not an imperfect art, an art subsequently developed or completed. It is an art the practitioners of which realised completely their aims or intentions. The school of Carissimi is no more a development of that of Palestrina, which immediately preceded it, than is St. Peter's at Rome a development of Notre Dame de Chartres. The Roman school was born, lived, and died, all within the limits of a century; and it died nobly, in the highest perfection it was capable of attaining.

(2.) That with this school ends for a time the history of unaccompanied music. True, Pitoni lived and wrote such music up to the middle of the eighteenth century; and some of the masters of the seventeenth tried their hands occasionally on the purely vocal motet, and even madrigal. But Pitoni was an anachronism, and for the most part the essays in this kind of these seventeenth century masters are monstrosities or lifeless repetitions of what had been done before them. The Romans, Benevoli and Bernabei, were driven to seek new "effects," in

compositions for three, four, and even more choirs, and the so-called *madrigali* of Alessandro Scarlatti, however ingenious, compare ill with his cantatas and other works, without exception accompanied. In Germany J. S. Bach and some members of his family, Telemann and a few others of his contemporaries, occasionally threw off a six or eight part motet; but with these exceptions the best continental composers, from the beginning of the seventeenth century to that of the nineteenth, worked exclusively in the mixed vocal and instrumental manner first practised by the school of Carissimi. Of the Germans, Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, of the French and Belgians, Rameau, Monsigny, Grétry, Méhul and Hérold, there does not exist to my knowledge a single piece of vocal harmony which was clearly intended by its composers to be sung without accompaniment.[1]

The revival of this kind of composition may be fairly claimed for ourselves. The English "glee" is the earliest form of unaccompanied part-song of modern times. It dates from the middle of the last century, and may be said to have ended with the first half of this, perhaps earlier. A glee is

[1] For examples of the sacred music only of all these masters, see the *Sammlung vorzüglicher Gesangstücke* of Rochlitz, a noble collection set forth in chronological order.

not, as its name might seem to imply, of necessity a composition of lively or festive character. The heading "serious glee," is not a misnomer. The word, by whom first used in modern times I know not, is from the Saxon "*gligge*," and simply means "music." Compositions by Purcell (d. 1695) and some of his contemporaries are sometimes found in collections headed as "glees." This is incorrect and misleading. The things so called are one and all *choruses*, from which the instrumental parts necessary to their completeness have been omitted. The earliest compositions to which the title can be appropriately applied are by Dr. Arne (d. 1778) and his contemporary, Dr. Boyce (d. 1779). Both these excellent masters however owe their reputations to works of other kinds. Our earliest veritable glee composer is Samuel Webbe, whose long life (1740–1827) synchronises closely with that of the kind of composition in which he so eminently excelled. His principal followers in order of time were Battishill, I. Stafford Smith, Stevens, Callcott and Horsley.[1] Other Englishmen

[1] Editions without number of these composers' glees are accessible, printed separately or in collections. The collected compositions of Webbe, of Callcott and of Horsley, are still by no means rare. I may venture to call attention to my own *Vocal Scores*, *Part Music*, and *Singers' Library* as including, with many compositions of this kind, always, and always likely to be, "popular," many others, both sacred and secular, published in them for the first time, and still not easily found elsewhere.

of about the same epoch, *e.g.* Attwood, Crotch, and Bishop, contributed to the repertory of the glee pure and simple; but they, like Arne and Boyce, have all done more and better in other ways.

A large number—it is to be feared, the majority—of the best glees lie under a disadvantage which has perhaps at all times checked their popularity, and is likely eventually to render their performance impossible. They are for male voices exclusively, the upper part or parts being only practicable and effective for the male, and of necessity, *falsetto*, countertenor. This voice, an artificial product, the cultivation of which in England would seem to date only from the restoration of Charles II., has become so rare that all the music written for it has a difficulty in finding interpreters. Though its compass is nearly conterminous with that of the deepest female voice, the contralto, the difference in quality of the two voices, presents an impediment to their employment on the same music. Notes identical in pitch do not inevitably produce identical effects; and a glee of which the countertenor part is sung, with whatever taste and correctness, by a contralto voice is commonly pointless and without spirit. Some "equal-voice" glees have recently been re-arranged,[1] with a view to their performance by the mixed or perfect choir

[1] In my own *Part Music* and *Singer's Library*.

(soprano, contralto, tenor, and bass); but it must be admitted that they lose much of their effect when so performed. There is a force in what is called "close harmony"—a necessity where exclusively male or exclusively female voices are employed—which cannot be given to a more widely distributed arrangement of parts: and, despite its shortcomings, there is a brightness in the quality of the countertenor voice which gives it a singular charm. Over and above these male-voice glees, there are however enough to give delightful occupation, during many and many a session, to the mixed or perfect choir. Few glees have been written with a view to choral performance. Each part in a glee should as a rule be assigned to a single voice. Whether madrigals were written with this view is not certain. Possibly their writers had no view on the subject whatever. Considerations about the effect of what they wrote troubled them less than they do us. Madrigals, from their more contrapuntal construction, greater continuity and "breadth," have for a long time past been sung chorally, whether in public or private, and the announcement for performance by four voices of one of the four-part choruses of Handel, would hardly create more astonishment than that of a madrigal by Wilbye or Bennett in like manner. What has long been done with madrigals has recently been done with some glees,

certainly with good effect. The process however should be applied only to those which most nearly approach the madrigal in structure. The shortness of the movements, the frequent changes of time, the deficiency of musical form and poverty of idea of a large number of glees, unfit them for choral performance,—perhaps indeed render them unworthy of any.

The "part-song," as now accepted, is a revival in this century of one of the musical forms of the last years of the sixteenth and the first of the seventeenth. The harmonized airs of the Italian Gastoldi, and the English Ford, are in all respects part-songs. Some of the later of our English glee composers may be said to have contributed, even if unconsciously, to this revival ;[1] but, as a conscious, purposeful and vigorous act, the credit of it must be awarded to the Germans, who, in their "war of liberation," employed it as a potent means for raising and maintaining patriotic fervour. Weber's settings of Körner's lyrics are some among the earliest and best of these soul-stirring effusions. They are all for male voices, in "close harmony," the parts shoulder to shoulder, as those who sang them would have stood to receive a charge of cavalry ; short, clear, outspoken utterances, and

[1] *E.g.* Spofforth in his "My Dear Mistress," Horsley in "See the Chariot at Hand," and Battishill in "Amidst the Myrtles."

simple enough to be learnt by heart, and sung without books, on the march, or round the table. This type has since been enormously developed; and specimens of it, as well for the mixed as for the male choir, have recently been produced, by English, French and Italian, as well as German, composers, important enough to tax the skill and sustaining power of the best-trained and most enduring of choirs. Some of the part-songs of our countrymen, Hatton, Leslie, the brothers Macfarren, Pearsall, Henry Smart, Sullivan, and of our countrywomen, C. A. Macirone, Elizabeth Stirling, and Agnes Zimmermann; of Adolph Adam and Gounod; of Pinsuti and Francesco Berger; claim admission on every ground into the category of what are called "large works."

The majority of these are for the mixed choir, though a considerable number are for male voices only. The upper parts of the latter, however, do not present the same difficulty as do those of the English glee. They are written for the high tenor voice, the range of which is lower than that of the countertenor, and of a totally different quality. In England the high tenor is more rare, or less cultivated, than in Germany or France.

The effect on the ear of choral music, especially if unaccompanied, is largely dependent on the balance, *i.e.* the comparative intensity, of the parts.

It is more difficult to ensure this balance in a glee than in a chorus. Rarely do we find two voices of the same force, more rarely of the same quality. But forbearance on the part of one singer and energy on the part of another will do much to equalise their several forces ; while frequent practice together will enable voices naturally discrepant, if not to assimilate, to blend. In a chorus, *numbers* present compensation for inequalities of intensity and conceal peculiarities of *timbre*, to an extent which, to those acquainted with the individual voices composing it, might have seemed unattainable.

With regard to the distribution of voices in a chorus, experience seems to show that assuming their forces to be approximately equal ;—the sopranos numbering ten, the contraltos should number six, the tenors four, and the basses six. This preponderance of sopranos over contraltos is necessitated by the more frequent division of their than of any other part ; that of basses over tenors by the necessity for a good foundation in harmony, and the penetrating quality of the tenor voice. It is desirable, whatever be the number assigned to any part, that it be an *equal* number ; for every part is occasionally liable to division, and division should leave the numbers still equal.

The possessors of each of these different kinds

of voice will be found commonly to present certain tolerably uniform characteristics. It is not in the least surprising that the best "readers" among women should be contraltos. An "inner" part catches the ear less than an upper part; and there is no dealing with it without "using one's mind." As an instrument of mental and even moral discipline, the practice of second soprano and of contralto parts is more efficacious than that of "first." Contraltos, therefore, are generally superior to sopranos, not merely in musical knowledge, but in power of attention, patience, and spirit. As is the contralto to the soprano, so is the bass to the tenor; though not for the same reasons. The tenor is the *enfant gaté* of the musical family. Though his more subtle organisation should generally make him a quicker and better reader than the bass, his average *insouciance* often prevents his profiting by this natural advantage. If he take a part away to study he will often bring it back, "not having had time to look at it." As a rule, he has a cold. He shirks rehearsals; or if he do present himself at one, comes late, and after the manner of a great wit, excuses himself practically by going away early.

I am unwilling to leave the performance of unaccompanied vocal music without a protest against an extravagance in connection with it, happily

attended with a good deal of difficulty, but which is occasionally realised with too much success. The *piano* is unquestionably one of the most beautiful effects of which music is susceptible; but it may be carried too far. There is a *piano*, or rather an ultra *pianissimo*, only producible from very strong throats, and even from them with pain, and at some risk. I have *seen*, not of course heard, a choir, whose utterance had attained such delicacy, that I should not have known that its constituents were actually singing, but from the occasional action of the lips, the purple cheeks, and protruded eyes (highly suggestive of apoplexy), of the majority of them. They had spent, I learned, many weeks in giving this negative effect to an arrangement of "The Blue Bells of Scotland," a melody extending over sixteen bars! Regarded æsthetically this stifled vocalization is among those excesses which uniformly accompany and mark the decline of an art. It was unknown to the practice of the Sistine Chapel in its best days, and to that of the great epoch of Italian solo singing—the last century. It is a modern heresy, which could only have sprung up among a people who, whatever their achievements in musical composition and instrumental performance, have not yet become, and are still far from being, *singers* in the proper sense of the word.

CHAPTER III.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC.

USIC in the house, purely as well as partially instrumental, has long been and is long likely to remain largely dependent on the pianoforte, deservedly called "the family orchestra." It is essentially the musician's instrument. Not that those who devote themselves especially to it are of necessity better "musicians" than those whose studies are carried on through any other instrument; but that it is only through a "clavier," that an idea can be presented of the effect of many different voices or instruments, or both, in combination. All wind instruments are monodic, incapable of producing more than one note at a time. Save under special circumstances and in very special hands, "bowed" instruments also are in the same category. Moreover, whereas a little skill on a monodic instrument is generally

worthless to the performer and intolerable to the listener, a very little skill on a keyed instrument is often very useful to the one and not unpleasing to the other. The least practised pianist need have no fear in respect to his intonation, or even his *timbre:* the one is the business of the tuner, the other to a large extent of the maker. For although all pianofortes are of necessity so much out of tune as to be unsupportable to the ears of acousticians, the practice of all great *virtuosi*, since the invention of the key-board, and the acceptance of keyed instruments by the mass of cultivated humanity, lend support to the belief that their untunableness is not such as to justify the adoption of any of the ingenious and costly expedients proposed for its removal.

A very moderate amount of skill will enable the pianist, who is also a musician, to present approximately to himself and others, effects the perfect realisation of which would require the combined efforts of a multitude of executants. He may, for example, play all the music extant of which the last chapter takes account; or present at least an outline of any piece of instrumental chamber-music, nay, even of any orchestral symphony, or choral work with orchestral accompaniment. The accomplished pianist—also a musician—can of course do more; for with him every

finger is an individual instrument, capable of giving its own particular expression to whatever may be assigned to it.

But the pianoforte is capable of something more than the presentation of ideas not originated in immediate connection with it. It has, in the course of the last hundred years, risen to the dignity of an independent power to the formation and maintenance of which the greatest masters of modern times have, with hardly an exception, lent their aid. Not that it owes everything even to them. It was the heir to, and began life with, considerable possessions. Some of the best composers of the seventeenth and earlier years of the eighteenth century, albeit their labours were more active in other directions—Handel and Bach, Lully and Rameau, Porpora and Marcello, Purcell and Arne—were popular composers of music for the spinet or the harpsichord, keyed instruments the strings of which were set in vibration by a *plectrum* instead of a hammer, as are those of the pianoforte. To the list of composers who made these their special study, Italy contributed her Dominico Scarlatti, France her "grand Couperin," and Germany her C. P. Emmanuel Bach. But the pianoforte has been still more favoured; since to its repertory Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Sterndale Bennett, — even Spohr,

though only occasionally,—every great modern composer has largely and lovingly contributed; while Clementi, Dussek, Field, Cramer, Hummel, Moscheles, Chopin, Thalberg, Cipriani Potter, and others, have devoted themselves, not only as composers, but also as executants and instructors, to the development of its resources and powers.

Among the best composers of the spinet or harpsichord epoch are many till lately comparatively unknown to, or forgotten by, the world at large. Some of the productions of the less obscure among these are to be found in the *Practical Harmony* of Clementi, a collection, now become rare, which it is to be hoped some musician of repute will be encouraged ere long to re-edit. A great living composer, Brahms, has recently superintended the re-publication of some of the works of Couperin; Fétis presented us a few years since with a charming selection from those of C. P. Emmanuel Bach; while the clavier works of the two great contemporaries, Handel and Bach, have received ample justice at the hands of Pauer and other musicians, whose editions of them are for the most part correct, elegantly printed, and inexpensive.

For no instrumental performer does so large and varied a repertory exist as for the pianist. Be his mechanical skill what it may, he will easily find

material for its exercise. For no instrumental performer either have such means of improvement in the mechanism of his art been provided. The quantity of pianoforte studies, exercises and the like, whether directed to the improvement of his style or the increase of his facility, is enormous. With him no shortcoming or imperfection need be permanent. To his hands may be given any amount of expansiveness, to his wrists any of elasticity; his left hand may be made as strong and supple as his right, and his third finger to move with the freedom and force of the first. For his every physical infirmity or shortcoming, a remedy is offered, the successfulness of which will depend only on the perseverance with which he applies it.

From the extent and form of the pianoforte key-board, two performers, even though their individual skill be moderate, can by its simultaneous exercise produce effects in their fulness all but orchestral.[1] Keyed instruments alone present this advantage. Duets, not as yet numerous, have been written for two pianofortes; and more recently compositions, or "arrangements," requiring two performers at each of these, eight hands in all. Irrespective of

[1] Arrangements "for four hands" have of late increased enormously in number, and been made to include compositions of every kind.

their cost, the difficulty of keeping two pianofortes at the same pitch, and the inconvenience arising from their magnitude, seeing the average capacities of English drawing-rooms, experience shows that the reduplication of instruments of the same quality is not inevitably followed by any corresponding result, even in intensity; obviously by none whatever in *variety*.

This last inestimable addition to musical effect is only attainable by the combination of instruments of different *timbre*. With the pianoforte the instrument of all others to be advantageously combined is the violin. To this nearly all the great modern composers have in practice borne testimony. The duets for violin and pianoforte of Mozart and Beethoven are among the most esteemed productions of those many-sided composers. A list of similar works by less gifted men would form a considerable volume. For the performance of these the violin is of course indispensable. Nor is it less useful "in the house," for that of music not specially intended for it. Its capabilities, having regard to its limited size, are astounding. Though no instrument rivals it in its own particular sphere of operation, it rivals others even in theirs. Its *pizzicato* equals or surpasses the only legitimate sounds of the harp and guitar.[1]

[1] The *mandolin* accompaniment to the serenade, "Deh! vieni," in *Don Giovanni*, is now always played on the violin *pizzicato*.

From its fourth string can be drawn sounds at least suggestive of those of the horn. Its "harmonics" bear comparison with the sounds of the flute in its upper register. More than any other artificial instruments those of the violin family can *sing;* and sing, under proper manipulation, as few even of instruments "not made with hands" and capable of speech can sing.

Nothing could possibly add to the charm and variety of music in the house like a general increase of skill in violin playing. And if this increase is made, it must be made, for the present at least, through female aid. An exclusive devotion, through the growing years of boyhood, to cricket and boating, however directly conducive to "the promotion of piety and good literature," leaves little time for the acquisition of skill on a musical instrument; not to say that hands stiffened and deformed by the bat and the oar, are little likely to make much of the bow or the finger-board. The blank and stupid astonishment with which the apparition—nay, the very mention—of a female violinist was once received among us, is happily a thing of the past; and the instrument which Fiesole has so often put into the hands of his angels, and Raphael of his saints, is no longer universally regarded as unbecoming to "the sex," nor in any hands ungraceful. But "everything in

this world," said Metastasio, "is habit; even virtue itself." There is an Oxford tradition, that at an amateur concert about the year 1827, the performance of the first male pianist that had been seen in that university was rewarded with a storm of hisses. The pianoforte was then regarded as essentially a woman's instrument!

Next to the violin, as a domestic instrument, comes the violoncello. The number of instances in which it is associated with the pianoforte and the violin, is only superior to the number of those in which it is associated with the pianoforte only. The trios for these instruments of Beethoven and Mendelssohn are among the noblest of their works; alike admirable for the beauty and treatment of their subjects, and the effectiveness of the particular means which give them expression.

For the violin family more and better concerted music has been written than for any other capable of interpreting music pure and simple. The strength, sweetness, and susceptibility of all its members engaged the attention of composers even before they had attained their present perfection. To an Italian, Gregorio Allegri (d. 1652), best known through his choral music, we owe the first quartet for bowed instruments; and to an Englishman, John Jenkins (d. 1666), some of the earliest music for every variety of *viol.* Much of this, it is

certain, obtained nothing less than continental reputation. Fifty years later, the Italian, Corelli,[1] founded a school which, at the end of another century, culminated in that of his countryman, Boccherini. Composition for bowed instruments after this transfers itself to Germany, and is gradually raised to its present surpassing excellence by the genius of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and their contemporaries and successors. One of these latter, Spohr, has taxed to the utmost the powers of this class of instruments, by the production of a set of duets for two violins without accompaniment—some of the most interesting and successful of his works.

But, it is certain, neither these instruments nor the power of using them, are commonly to be found in the English house. The pianoforte, "that trusty servant of all work," does duty there for every kind of string and even of pipe. Can nothing be done to supplement these for the time being, while our young violinists are learning their art? Assuredly; not much perhaps, nor enough certainly, but something.

It is inconceivable that the quality of sound produced by the vibrating metal tongue—the common voice of a variety of the same instrument bearing

[1] A first volume of the works of Corelli has recently been published, under the superintendence of Dr. Joachim.

the names harmonium, concertina, accordion, æolina and the like—should ever take permanent hold on the cultivated musical ear. That it can take a momentary hold on the most cultivated of musical ears, but that this hold can be no more than momentary, the following very short story may do something to prove.

I had the honour, as a very young man, of sitting in the pit of the old Haymarket Opera House, during a miscellaneous concert, beside the eminent English composer, now many years deceased, Thomas Attwood.[1] Among the announcements in the programme was one of a solo for the concertina, to be played by the late Giulio Regondi, then very young, but already celebrated as a musician and performer on the guitar. The concertina was then a new instrument, which neither Mr. Attwood nor I had before heard. Had the thing on which Regondi was about to play been a salt-box, or a marrow-bone, no one who knew him could have awaited his appearance without pleasure. He appeared, and in a few moments captivated all hearers—among them eminently my illustrious neighbour. His captivity, however, was not of long duration; as the following running commentary

[1] Attwood had the honour of being both the pupil of Mozart and the teacher of Goss, whose contributions, especially to ecclesiastical music, place him in the very highest rank of English composers.

which, though addressed to me, was rather, I take it, a soliloquy than a communication, will show.

After a few bars (Attwood *loq.*) "This is exquisite." After a few more, "This will revolutionize the orchestra." "What can you want with two clarionets when you can have this?" After many more bars, "This (meaning the composition in progress) is rather long." Presently, "This (meaning the instrument in use) is rather monotonous." Later, "This (composition) is very long." Later still, "This (instrument) certainly wants relief." And soon after, but before the end of the first movement, "I'm sick of this!" I cannot help thinking that the story of the impression produced by this instrument on a highly cultivated ear at the end of a quarter of an hour, will prove to have been the story of its impression on the ears of the world at large at the end of another quarter of a century.

Yet has the concertina not a few good qualities. Though rarely of the same pitch as the particular pianoforte with which it is accidentally combined, and though practically untunable, it does not easily get out of tune with itself. Its compass is extensive, especially for an instrument so small and easily carried. It is capable, in good hands, of much—in bad, of *too* much—"light and shade." Whatever objections may be made to its *timbre*

apply equally to the harmonium, and even the so-called American "organ;" instruments both of which are constantly subjected to misuse to which the concertina is not liable. For I cannot but think it a misuse of these instruments, to yield to the temptation presented by their key-boards, and play upon them as though they were really "organs." The roughness of their quality, the inequality in intensity of their upper and lower notes, and the obtrusive force of their "resultant sounds," disqualify them as instruments of harmony, and render their simultaneous production of more than two—at the utmost, three—sounds insufferably wearisome. It is as an instrument of melody that the harmonium may be made useful "in the house;" taking the place, like the concertina, of the missing violin, viola, violoncello, or double-bass, of the flute, oboe, clarionet, bassoon, trumpet, or horn,[1] nay, even of the human voice.[2]

This being possible, it will be said that, admitting the inferior quality of the vibrating metal tongue to that of the string under the influence of the bow,

[1] Mr. Evans, of Union Mews, Middlesex Hospital, London, makes or used to make harmoniums of the compass and approximate *timbre* of each of these instruments, a set of which I have repeatedly turned to account in combination with a small stringed band. The effect was excellent.

[2] In some of our female training colleges the inevitably wanting tenor and bass parts of music for the perfect choir are played on a harmonium; the accompaniments proper on a pianoforte.

one of the instruments proposed as a substitute for the violin—the harmonium—is already partially familiar to every pianist; and the other, the concertina, is one on which a moderate amount of skill is obviously easily attainable; whereas on the violin a moderate amount of skill is very hardly attainable, and is not very useful or delight-giving when attained. The concertina student, on his first essay, can do little worse than mistake one key for another, and so sound A when he meant to have sounded B, or the like. As an isolated fact, too, his A or his B may be as good as his master's, however unexpected or out of place on any particular occasion. But the first essay of the violin student is commonly of a kind to render the place wherein it is made unfit for human habitation. The results of a first application of "the tail of the horse to the bowel of the cat" are commonly agonies to the applicant, and outrages on all within hearing of him. The first month at the violin should be spent on the top of the highest hill, at the extremity of the most desolate plain, or in the recesses of the deepest cavern in the student's neighbourhood. No solitude can be too complete for him, no banishment too strictly maintained. By his own act he makes himself unfit for human companionship, places himself outside the pale of civilisation.

Admitting all this to be true, with or without qualification, the hideous results of first attempts at performance on the violin, and a good many instruments besides, are generally due to a single cause, and that cause a remediable one—the still all but universal practice of teaching music and performance on an artificial instrument *together*. By teaching *music*, as distinct from musical performance, I mean inducing that sympathy of eye and ear which enables its possessor to know what a succession of musical symbols brought under the former should represent to the latter; or, *vice versâ*, how a succession and even a combination of sounds, addressed to the ear, may be recorded and presented intelligibly to the eye; in fewer words, to enable a musical student to "know the *sound*" of what he sees represented in musical characters.

Now not only can this be done, but it can be best and most easily done through an instrument God has given to every human creature, the voice. All musical education should begin—the earlier the better—with singing, the rational practice of which involves the acquisition of a number of principles and facts, and—more important still—the early formation of a number of *habits*, which lie at the root alike of musical science and skill. This rule having been followed, the beginner on whatever

instrument would find a great deal of the work apparently before him really behind him. Not only would he recognise as a fact that this note was called C, and that D, this note a crotchet, that a quaver, but he would know, *before he heard them*, how D and C *ought* to sound in reference to one another, and how a crotchet and a quaver in the same strain should be rhythmically proportioned. Above all, his ear being already "formed," having once learned the place on the finger or key-board of the notes whose effect he was able to *anticipate*, he would not only, with a very little practice, avoid playing "wrong notes," but soon—weeks, months, nay years, sooner than the average beginner—avoid playing right notes wrongly, *i.e.* out of tune. The management of the bow-arm, the action of the fingers on a key-board, of the lips on a reed or a mouth-piece—these are mechanical arts, and, like the management of the bat or the leaping-pole, matters of practice.

The violin—I include always the viola[1] and violoncello—is no doubt a difficult instrument; but the difficulty of acquiring a serviceable amount of

[1] This instrument has been the especial favourite of more than one great composer. Both Mozart and Mendelssohn, for example, were "tenor" players. The part assigned to it in the quartet, while always an interesting one, demands generally somewhat less mechanical skill than that assigned to the first and even the second violin.

skill on it has been much exaggerated. To become a Joachim, a Holmes, or a Piatti is the work of a life-time, even for men gifted with equal aptitude and perseverance to these, turned to account under skilful guidance and at the right time of life, and supplemented and encouraged by a thousand circumstances as impossible to take account of as to bring about or foresee. But there is an amount of mechanical skill below—very much below—that of artists of this class, which, if accompanied by feeling, taste, and intelligence, may contribute largely to the variety and agreeableness of music in the house.

Two instruments presenting in their forms and qualities contrasts with the pianoforte hardly less striking than those of the violin family, the harp and the guitar, seem on their way to, if they have not already reached, the limbo of forgotten things, "in the house." In the orchestral scores, especially of dramatic composers, the harp has of late years taken an unprecedentedly and deservedly high place. As a source of variety in domestic music its absence is to be regretted. The elegance of its form too gratifies the eye almost as much as its utterances do the ear. But its use is attended with some drawbacks. Unless constantly watched—not easy unless it be constantly used—it is apt to fall out of gear. Under the most favourable circum-

stances as to care, its strings have a provoking habit of snapping just as they are wanted. Rarely is it found available for use without tuning, and the number of its strings sometimes make this a tedious process. Yet its crisp and penetrating sounds, as they give a life and brightness to the orchestra otherwise unattainable, justify regret at its all but universal banishment from the house. The guitar commends itself especially to the singer, by its *timbre*, portability, and elegance of form. But for more than the playing of a few chords, it is a difficult instrument, and even in skilful hands not a very effective one.

Before leaving instrumental music in the house, a word or two in reference to the choice of the instrument on which, as has been said, it will always be largely dependent, will not be out of place.

The pianoforte has assumed, in the course of its as yet short life, many different forms, most of them concessions to the exigencies of space, and all, with one exception, belying to the eye their several inevitable constructions. Strings yield sounds of different pitch proportionately, in general terms, to their relative lengths. The strings of a "square" or upright pianoforte, stretched over a rectangular sounding-board or concealed in a rectangular case, do not show this, but, on the

contrary, show, or at least suggest, the reverse—that they are all of equal lengths, and stretched in the directions taken by the sides of the case. The "grand" pianoforte alone "shows its construction;" the case taking its form from that of the sounding-board, in its turn dictated by the various lengths of the strings. In this form alone too do the lengths of the strings, approximately at least, correspond with the pitch of the sounds produced by them; in every other, strings producing graver sounds must be unduly thickened, in order that they may be short enough for the Procrustean bed in which they are to be of necessity "accommodated." Moreover, instruments of some of these forms hide not merely their own construction, but the faces of those who play upon them. A pianist with the back of his head towards his audience is an unmeaning spectacle enough, but a singer in the same posture will be at a greater disadvantage: half of what he utters will be imperfectly heard, and the whole without effect. True, the "square" and the "upright" can be withdrawn from their normal positions against the wall, and placed in more favourable ones; but the "square" is now almost an extinct variety of its class, and the "upright" is often high enough completely to mask the player, or the singer who accompanies himself.

The pianoforte proper is the "grand." To it

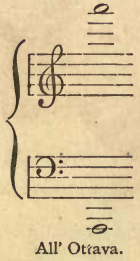
under no circumstances can any one of the objections I have named be applicable. It presents moreover many definite advantages. The direction in which its strings are placed (horizontally), is the direction most favourable to their effect when set in vibration, and the construction of the "action," or apparatus by which this is effected, such as to ensure the most responsive touch. Whether the intensity of this instrument has not in many instances of late been unduly increased, is a question. This at least is certain; that the pianoforte with which Mozart and even the more recent Beethoven have associated other instruments, wind as well as stringed, was unequal to anything like the force of the "grand" of to-day; and that consequently their chamber music is now commonly heard under circumstances which they never contemplated.

Whatever pianoforte however be chosen for use in the house—and the choice will inevitably be affected by circumstances—the chooser is counselled, when he has narrowed his field of choice to two or three instruments, not to be satisfied with playing or hearing played on them half-a-dozen pleasing and becoming passages, but to strike and listen to —if possible at some distance—*single notes* in succession, by way of testing their qualities individually as well as collectively. Every pianoforte, made, through a skilful hand, the exponent of

pleasing music, sounds well—especially in the manufacturer's show-room; single notes only can be judged without the unfair advantage afforded by the skilful hand or the pleasing music made by it. Again, it should be remembered that the pianoforte attractive to-day will not of necessity be equally attractive after a year's "wear and tear," however "fair" they may be. An instrument of somewhat muffled quality, and even of sluggish touch, sometimes improves greatly under proper usage, revealing qualities, of course innate, but not at first obvious to the ear or hand. A very brilliant and readily-speaking instrument, on the contrary, is generally "at its best;" and things at their best, though if essentially good they may remain good, cannot get better. The Vicar of Wakefield chose his wife, "as she did her wedding-gown, not for a fine glossy surface, but such qualities as would wear well." So with a pianoforte, generally chosen with a view to long companionship, if not, like Mrs. Primrose, for life.

It would be a great advantage to those who purchase pianofortes, if the ignorant craving for a "full compass" could be modified or extinguished. Its results at present are a considerable number of perfectly useless keys and strings, which add first to the cost, and then to the bulk and weight of the instrument they encumber. If those who can read

these notes[1] would only consider how rarely, save perhaps in jest, they are touched or heard, they would cease to compel manufacturers to encumber their finger-boards with them by, I am told, uniform insistance.

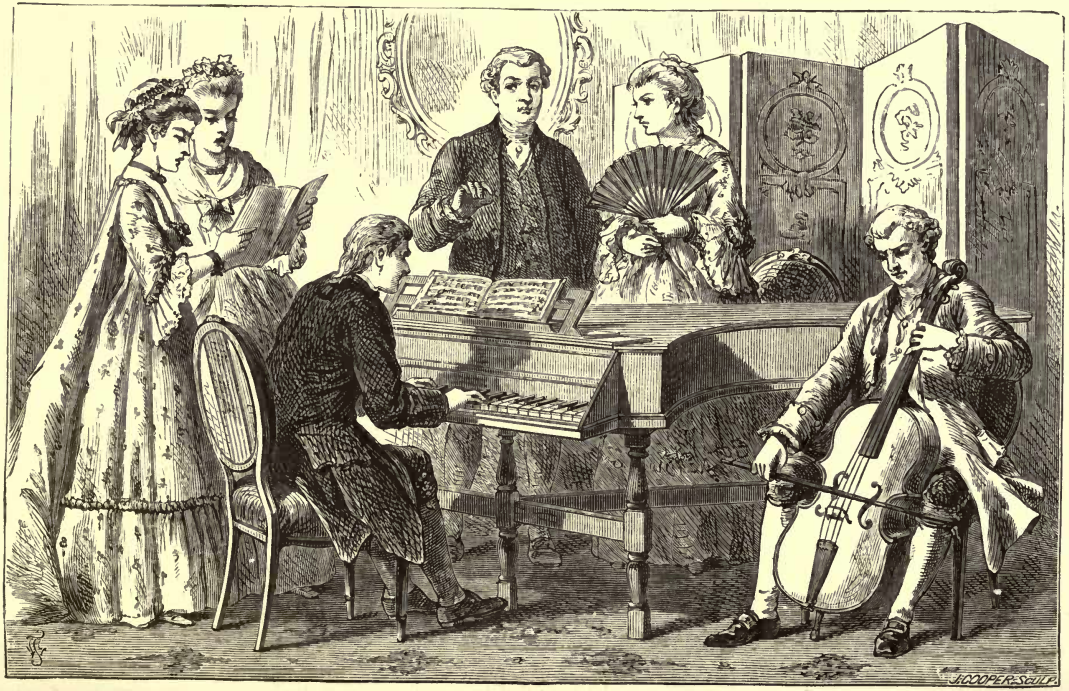


The finest works of their class, the "Forty-Eight Fugues," of J. S. Bach, can all be played on a key-board of *four* octaves; the pianoforte works of Mozart, and the majority even of those of Beethoven, require generally but five, never more than five and a half, octaves of keys. Will any amateur exercise the good sense to order, and any maker the courage to revive, the instrument represented in the woodcut,[2] an instrument elegant and convenient in its form, easily movable and capable of being made resonant enough for every kind of music fitted to "the house."

It would be an abuse of my readers' confidence, supposing I had been so fortunate as to have won it, and otherwise unbecoming to a book of this kind, were I to press the claim of any particular

[1] In some recent American instruments this monstrous compass has been exceeded!

[2] Made in 1782 by Crang Hancock, and now the property of Miss Jekyll, of Wargrave Hill, by whose kind permission a drawing of it has been made expressly for this book.



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house or houses, English or foreign, from which pianofortes might be with safety obtained. This much however it may be fair to say, that the best specimens of the "family orchestra" are likely to be found, in the largest numbers, in those houses which have been longest established. Well-seasoned raw material is possibly now attainable by every maker who will pay for it; but the workman of the old house is commonly more experienced, and therefore more skilful, than he of the new. Moreover, they are the holders of traditions. In some of the oldest London, Paris, and Vienna houses the workmen of to-day are not merely the pupils and successors of their immediate predecessors, but the sons, grandsons, and even great-grandsons of those through whose skill their houses have attained their great and deserved reputations. Hence no doubt to a large extent the individuality as well as the excellence of their several productions.

CHAPTER IV.

ACCOMPANIED VOCAL MUSIC.

THIS, the most popular kind of music, dates, barring of course individual experiments, from the end of the sixteenth century, and owes its beginnings to the efforts of the Florentine Academy (1590–1612) to recover the "music of the ancients." Its first successes are due to Carissimi, who lived long enough (from c. 1585 to c. 1676)[1] to see it attain considerable perfection both in his own compositions and through the efforts of others who profited indirectly as well as directly from his example or instruction; and this not only in his own country, but in France and England. Its perfection was to be attained in Germany subsequently. As we have it now, its two kinds, sacred and secular, may be roughly

[1] Both these dates are uncertain. It is possible that the first should be earlier and the second later.

classed as music for a single voice, music for two or more single voices, choral music, and music wherein any two or all of these classes may be combined. Thus we have the solo with chorus, the duet, trio, or quartet with chorus, the chorus proper, interspersed with solos, and so on.

The repertory of vocal solos is practically inexhaustible. Probably there has never lived a composer who has not written a song, and many composers have certainly written hundreds of songs.

Till comparatively recent times, solos for the lower voices of both sexes, contraltos and basses, were far less numerous than those for the higher, sopranos and tenors. An ingenious writer,[1] Lord Mount-Edgcumbe (d. 1828), who lived to make acquaintance with the now consummated change in this matter, has contended that this change was not an improvement, nor one likely to contribute to the welfare of music; that, however it might be with respect to contraltos, basses could not be made to *sing*, in the proper sense of the word; and that the expression *basso cantante*, new in his day, was a practical admission of the truth of this. His proposition, contradicted by isolated facts, before it was made, has subsequently been refuted by a thousand. It is inconceivable, for instance, that Handel should have given to the world airs like "Tears

[1] *Musical Reminiscences.*

such as tender fathers shed," "How willing my paternal love"—the list could be easily extended—without the hope or certainty that somebody would some day be found to sing them; and principal parts in some of the most enduring of musical dramas have in later times called into existence, or resulted from the existence of, basses as well as contraltos who have proved themselves some of the greatest of vocalists. The names of the basses Ambrogetti, Galli, and Tamburini, of the contraltos Grassini, Pisaroni, and Alboni, are inseparable from the history of opera. As a fact however the stock of airs for the soprano voice is still considerably in excess of that for the contralto. Moreover, the greater part of the latter is due to Italian composers, the Germans and French having contributed comparatively little to it.

This is due in a great measure to a physical cause—the abundance of contraltos in Italy, and their paucity in Germany and France. The "paucity of contraltos" however anywhere is a phrase always to be received with a good deal of caution. To this day the performance of a contralto or "second" part is regarded—how ignorantly and foolishly every musician knows—as requiring less skill than that of a soprano, or "first" part. Most women wish to have, or to be considered to have, soprano voices, and to sing "first parts."

They might as well wish for eyes of another colour than those which nature has given them, as for voices of different compass and quality. The parallel, however, stops here; for whereas wishing for blue eyes will not spoil black, wishing for a soprano voice on the part of a contralto often induces singing soprano parts, a procedure commonly ending, at an early interval, in the possession of no voice at all.

Young female vocalists, whose eventual compass and quality no experienced singing-master would hesitate to forecast as contralto, are often misled by the possession of a "second register" of considerable extent. The application of this to soprano parts, though for a time possible, and even easy, is much to be discouraged. With well-directed practice the extent of this second register will diminish, while what remains of it will approximate itself to the first, and thus contribute to the completion of a voice at once extensive and homogeneous.

Men have an advantage over women, in being able earlier and with more certainty to ascertain what the compass and quality of their voices are, or are likely to be. Whatever may be their wishes in the matter too, they commonly bow to the decrees of nature with better grace than women. Though very young men generally desire to be

basses, and middle-aged to be tenors, we as rarely find a bass trying to "sing tenor" as a tenor to "sing bass."

For the mezzo-soprano, as for its male counterpart the baritone, solos expressly fit are neither few nor inferior. In concerted music, as a rule, there is no defined place for either. In most cases the mezzo-soprano will be found best suited by a contralto part, the baritone by a bass; when either of such parts is divided, by the higher of the two.

The treatment of the mezzo-soprano, as of the baritone, voice sometimes requires very delicate management. Occupying a sort of border land, both may be, or might have been, in many instances, transferred to either of the territories which this border-land separates. Many baritones, it is certain, might have been tenors; many mezzo-sopranos sopranos, had the "production" of their voices been so directed as to have enabled them to extend their compass upwards with ease and good effect. No doubt a certain energy, not always at his command, is needed for the supposed baritone, before he can occupy permanently, as he can generally temporarily, the tenor register. Certain it is that some of the greatest of tenors have been at first treated, and have even sung in public, as baritones.[1]

[1] "Too many baritones," said Mendelssohn once, in relation to the prospects of choral singing; but he added, "everything gets

The solo performances, instrumental as well as vocal, of English amateurs are now commonly less ambitious, and therefore more pleasing, than they were wont to be. The recent increase in the number of instrumental pieces dependent for their effect rather on sentiment than mechanical skill, and the revived interest in comparatively ancient generally answering to the same description, have driven out both the show-piece and the frequently dry and always prolix second and third-rate sonata. Enormously as skill in pianoforte playing has been developed during the last quarter of a century, its application has tended to approximate instrumental to vocal art—to make the pianoforte *sing*. Mendelssohn is not our only composer of "Songs without Words:" for the designation might be extended to a great deal of the best music, old as well as new, which we now hear in the house and even in the concert-room.

In vocal performance too, public as well as private, the tendency has been, for a long time past, in the same direction. Airs like "The Soldier tired" and "O bid your faithful Ariel fly" must once have found many *dilettante* executants; since rarely do we look through an old "music book" without finding one or other of those "bravuras."

up." Unfortunately *pitch*,—not a factor in his calculation—has also "got up" since 1846.

But to the execution of bravuras few even among modern artists are now equal. From the dramatic or quasi-dramatic scena physical incapacity and want of training are likely always to deter the amateur: nor would even its competent execution "in the house," inevitably without scenic accessories and associations, be ever likely to give pleasure. Whatever the sentiment of chamber music, its expression should be accompanied by something of reticence. Vehement outbursts of rage, of despair, even of grief, are fine things in their proper places, with their own antecedents and surroundings, all somewhat removed from us in space as well as time. Medea, Semiramis, and Lucrezia Borgia are fascinating, however formidable, figures—on the other side of footlights which illumine the worlds of fiction or history to which they belong. At our elbows they are anachronisms, monsters, with whose ways we have nothing in common, for whose sorrows we have little sympathy.

The chamber solo may suggest, though it should seldom make out, any thing. It need as little be cold as extravagant. It may be characterised by passion as well as by sentiment; but the passion must not be "torn to tatters," nor the sentiment too strongly emphasised. Even the dramatic singer cannot afford to throw off all consciousness of his personality, or to forget that he is an artist. "If

an actor," said the late Charles Young once in my hearing, "allows himself to be overpowered by his feelings, his audience will never find out what's the matter with him."

Poets would seem often to have forgotten that a song is a thing to be *sung*, and that with their verse music has of necessity to be conjoined; composers also that this conjunction should be made through music not only beautiful in itself, but accordant with that which suggests it, as well in sentiment as in rhythm. Singers would sometimes seem to think that the words of a song are no part of it whatever, or a part so insignificant that no care need be taken about their utterance or the making them intelligible. No singer says this, or would say it, in as many words; but many sing as though they thought it. A discussion about the language of a song is really not an uncommon commentary on its execution; English hearers, not having understood a word, taking it for granted that it must be foreign; foreign hearers, in like predicament, that it must be English or any language except their own, or any other with which they are acquainted. Certainly a great deal of singing goes on "in a tongue not understanded of the people" who listen to it. Something of this is no doubt often to be laid to the share of the composer—to false emphasis arising from misappropriation of

notes to words; some of it to overloaded or over-played accompaniment. But the fault is most often in the singer, who possibly *speaks* plainly enough under ordinary circumstances, but who finds a difficulty in uttering this or that sound on this or that vowel, a difficulty commonly got over, or *round*, by the sacrifice, not of the note, but of the syllable. The voice is so much more easily produced from the central point of the "variable cavity" than from any other, *i.e.* on the vowel *aa*, that the vowels of many otherwise good artists have a constant tendency to approximate to it. Thus we get *say* for see, *saae* for say, *taaone* for tone; *traaop* for troop; and in diphthongs, an undue preponderance being given to *aa* or *o*, we get *naaight* for night, *foin* for fine, and the like. A good deal of this is, it must be feared, not easily remediable after a certain time of life, the time during which the mature voice of man or woman is assuming its permanent character, and in the course of which the power of producing any note of it on any syllable must be acquired, if ever. Still something may be done, even after this, and would be done, were the necessity for doing it more generally felt. How pressing is this necessity needs little demonstration.

Could the auditors in an average English musical party be cross-questioned or "polled," it would probably be found that for every one among them

capable of appreciating or taking an intelligent interest in the notes of a song, half a dozen at least would be found in like condition in respect to the words, and the words only. The exact proportion these two sets of hearers bear to one another does not affect the argument. This much is certain, that a vocalist who can *say* as well as sing inevitably enlarges the sphere of his influence enormously. Indeed it is notorious that prodigious effect has again and again been given to verse, by persons whose powers of dealing with the music seemingly inseparable from it were the smallest conceivable. Rachel's utterances, hardly to be called musical, of the *Marseillaise*, in 1848, are still remembered by those who heard them, and their effect is known to thousands who did not. On the other hand the *playing* of songs by great violinists has been known to create similar excitement. Who that ever heard the "Erlking," as Ernst used to play it, can forget its passion or its pathos? But the singer can, or could, do the work both of a Rachel and of an Ernst—give us the melody as well as the verse of Rouget de Lisle, and interpret the poetry of Goethe through the music of Schubert.

Now if there be any one particular in which the amateur vocalist might reasonably hope to equal—I had almost said, excel—the artist, it is in this matter of refined and intelligible utterance. It is

the side of the singer's art on which general culture tells more than on any other. For the utterance of those who have read much, thought much, been much and early in good company, is distinguished in a thousand ways from that of persons who have not enjoyed these advantages: and this too notwithstanding provincialisms and peculiarities which neither Eton nor Oxford have enabled those who have caught or inherited them to shake off."

The artist has excuses in this matter of verbal clearness to which the amateur cannot lay claim; that he is called upon, for the most part nowadays, to exercise his art in rooms of a magnitude not only exceeding that of any ever found "in the house," but of any which his predecessors had "to fill." The first business of him who addresses the public, whether in speech or song, is to be heard; and if the vowel *a* is more easily heard than *e*, and the vowel *aa* than *a*, we must continue to put up with *say* for see, and *saae* for say. But of the injurious effects of our present huge concert-rooms, and our present high concert-*pitch*, on the art of singing, this is not the place to speak. The admiration of, and the necessity for, force show no signs at present of becoming less. It is to be

[1] It may reasonably be asked of those who advocate the spelling of English words "as they are pronounced," what pronunciation is to be the standard? That of Lancashire, of Northumberland, of Norfolk, or of Middlesex?

feared that the day is farther before than behind us when it will be possible to report of the singer, loud and bad, that—

> "Though his voice completely filled his house,
> It also emptied it."

All this has reference to and is suggested by the English language, to the use of which I cannot help thinking that the English vocalist should limit himself more often than he does. We are not, as a people, good practical linguists; and of an English audience to whom a song in a foreign language is addressed a very small minority is ever able to take in the full meaning of the words on a first hearing, be they ever so clearly enunciated. On the other hand, every song suffers enormously from being sung to words other than those to which its music was first set. No question is here raised as to the superior fitness for music of one language over another. Every language probably could be shown to be fit for music, by a composer who was master of it, or a vocalist who could really speak it—or any other: for the singer with whom clear utterance is a habit will, with a little practice, utter one language as clearly as another. The singing of English by Italians, in some cases but imperfectly acquainted with it, is generally distinct—almost to a fault. One language may of

itself be more generally becoming to the voice than another, because more abounding in resonant vowels; but the air originally set to German words will suffer as much from being sung to Italian, as that originally set to Italian from being sung to German. "Quì sdegno non s'accende," in *Il Flauto Magico,* is a feeble and pointless substitute for "In diesen heilgen Hallen" in *Die Zauberflöte,* and the line "Dir Tonkunst, Ehre und Dank" in *Alexander's Feast,* a clumsy and blundering *locum tenens* for "But music won the cause." I have never yet been able to reconcile myself to the Italian versions of *Guillaume Tell* or *Les Huguenots,* with both of which I made my first acquaintance, through ear and eye, in their original French forms.

So that, after all, I am compelled to leave the singer between the horns of a dilemma, one of which is the probability of being imperfectly or not at all understood, and the other the certainty of spoiling wholly or in part what he sings.

With the originally English song he is perfectly safe. The works of the great and prolific Handel are, with very few exceptions, all English. Haydn, too, has honoured our tongue by occasionally turning it to account, *e.g.*, in his exquisite sets of canzonets, the Italian words sometimes appended to which are translations from the original English,

mostly of Mrs. John Hunter. Mendelssohn too has shown his estimate of it in repeated instances.

But with these exceptions the vocalist must fall back for music of a higher class inspired by English poetry, on old English composers, such as Lawes, Blow, Purcell, Arne, Storace, and Shield ;[1] on some who have more recently passed from us, like Bishop, Balfe, Wallace, Loder, Charles Horn, Rooke, and Sterndale-Bennett ; and on our contemporaries, John Barnett, Hatton, G. A. Macfarren, H. Smart, Sullivan, and others.

Nor let it be forgotten, that most of our resident foreign contemporaries, *e.g.* Benedict, Francesco Berger, Blumenthal, Costa, Pinsuti, Randegger, have been frequent and successful setters of English words.

There is also, over and above this large repertory of "composers' songs," another never presented even to learned hearers without causing pleasure, of which not only are the melodies beautiful, but the words well worth making intelligible—the "national" songs of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. The exhaustive collection of Mr. Chappell[2] will prove an inexhaustible treasure-house of the first. The best of the second, it must be

[1] Specimens of these and other masters of English Song will be found in Mr. Hatton's *Songs of England*, and my *Fifty-eight English Songs of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.*

[2] *Music of the Olden Time.*

admitted, lose much of their charm when ungraced by the accent—as difficult to acquire as it is to lose—of the people to whom we are indebted for them. Single words here and there tentatively vocalised in approximate Scottish fashion,—town pronounced *toon*, away as *awaw*, and the like, by an English mouth, only suggest the absence of, without in the least replacing, the true Doric,—a language, be it always remembered, not a dialect, and the language of some of the greatest of lyric poets. From this difficulty or any similar, the performance of Irish melodies—shall I say *the* Irish melodies[1]—is wholly free. These have of late been strangely neglected. Yet it would be hard to point to any *body* of songs—words worth singing, and melodies fit to sing them to—which would better reward feeling, intelligent, and intelligible delivery. That to them, as to Scottish songs, a superior flavour may be imparted by an accent slightly Milesian, is certain. But this flavour, however charming, is not essential; they are English as well in their vocabulary as their idiom.

Some of the Welsh melodies are indisputably some of the most beautiful native to these islands. To what extent the majority of them, in their present condition, are "ancient," is a question—not

[1] With words by Thomas Moore, now accessible in more than one inexpensive form.

to be discussed with a Welshman. But of their strength, sweetness, distinctive character, and fitness for singing, there can be no question. Unfortunately they have not yet found a Burns or a Moore. The verses recently applied to a good many of them by the late native poet "Talhaiarn," are, I am told by Celtic scholars, poetical and fit; and they have certainly a pleasant sound as uttered by a Welsh "female mouth." But alas! very few of us can attach to them meaning other than is given by the notes with which they are associated, and—no small matter in itself—the "facial" expression of the singer.

For songs of this kind, in which the words and the melody are all important, great care is needed in the choice of a "key." This choice the singer must make for himself, nor rest till he is certain of having made it successfully. The compass or range of national melody is often very large, so large, indeed, as to make its vocal utterance a matter of some difficulty. But the singer who wishes to give it effect must tolerate—sometimes he will be obliged to alter—a too high or too low a note here and there, in order that he may bring the majority of the notes into that part of his voice in which he is sure to be able to speak best, the middle. The Irish melodies lie for the most part under the disadvantage of indifferent

"arrangement." The "symphonies" associated with them are often incongruous, and the "accompaniments" over-laden. The former can be dealt with very simply, by omission; the latter must generally be re-arranged—the more simply and unpretentiously the better.

If not quite so large as that among solos, the field of choice among duets, trios, quartets, and other accompanied pieces requiring only one voice to a part, is quite large enough to furnish inexhaustible occupation for the most diligent of readers and the most enthusiastic of executants. Modern opera, from the time of Mozart, abounds in concerted pieces which, though most effective on the scene, have quite charm enough, regarded as pure music, to justify their repetition off it. I do not know that the trio in *Idomeneo*, "Soave sia il vento," or the quintet in *Così fan tutte*, "Cosa sento," loses anything by its transference from the stage to the drawing-room. The musical dramas—few ever now dramatically presented—of the Italians, Guglielmi, Sarti, Sacchini, Cimarosa, Cherubini, Paer, and Spontini; of the Germans, Winter, Spohr, and Hummel; of the Frenchmen, Rameau, Montigny, Gretrey, Dalayrac, Mehul, B. Kreutzer, Nicolo, Boieldieu, and Hérold;—these are, one and all, treasures of concerted music, commonly as un-

known to the musical amateur as they are to the theatrical manager.

To those who have *acquired* the taste which I have already so earnestly advocated, for music of epochs still more remote, the repertory is still larger, and indeed practically inexhaustible. For two voices there are the *Madrigali* of Clari,[1] the *Duetti da Camera* of Durante,[2] and—as unfamiliar as the masses of Dufay—the *Chamber Duets* of a composer not otherwise unknown to us, Handel. The *Stabat Mater*[3] of Pergolesi is set throughout for two (female) voices. The sacred music of the school in which the last-named delightful composer was trained, that of Naples, is rich in movements for every number and variety of vocal executants; and a single work, the *Salmi di Davidde*[4] of Marcello, might delightfully employ a party of good and adventurous readers during many many a long session. From these examples of works, and collection of works—some perhaps troublesome to get at—I must not omit the name of one of the largest and most accessible

[1] An excellent, though now scarce, edition of these, with pianoforte accompaniment by Mirecki, was published in Paris some years since by Carli.

[2] I have never seen a printed edition of these; MS. copies, however, are often to be met with.

[3] Recently reprinted by Novello, Ewer, & Co., in a cheap form.

[4] There is an English adaptation of these—not to be trusted.

with which I am acquainted—the selection made from the "Fitzwilliam Music," by the late Vincent Novello, a truly splendid monument of the composers of the "Transition Period."

But many of the compositions to which I have just called attention are isolated movements, which do not form parts of large continuous works. Such pieces are, as a rule, generally inferior in interest and effect to those that do; and even the latter, when torn from their places and contexts, will be found immeasurably less interesting and effective than they were as portions of connected wholes. Take, for example, the well-known air from Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, "O rest in the Lord." No doubt, delivered by a touching voice, and with just expression, it will even of itself give pleasure; but preceded by the recitatives "Arise, Elijah," and "O Lord, I have laboured in vain," and followed by the chorus, "He that shall endure to the end," the same voice will be more touching, the same singer's expression more just, while the air itself will give such pleasure as can only be given by a thing in its place. For relief and repose are as needful for the ear as for the eye; and the familiar and commonplace can be no more banished from art than from nature. There is a passage in one of Mr. Ruskin's early books, wherein he tells us how, finding himself in one of the most romantic

scenes of Switzerland, he was glad to take refuge from the ravine and the torrent in the company of a few common wild-flowers on the way-side. Moreover, connection is of itself a source of interest; and forms which grow out of one another are as superior to those which are unconnected as is a collar of metal-work to a bead necklace. No doubt, if the choice of hearing the best passages only of a great musical work, or of hearing the work in its entirety, be offered to an average auditor, he will probably choose to hear the former. He will be wrong, even from his own point of view. For be his knowledge and taste the lowest conceivable, his pleasure in these best passages will be less than it would have been had he heard them in their places, and set off by others, possibly *of themselves* incapable of giving pleasure.

But the student should begin by believing, that not only has this or that in a great work its beauty, but everything its use. To master in its entirety a great poem, building, picture, statue, or piece of music, is an aim from the successful realisation of which comes not merely information, but increase in the powers by which it has been attained—powers through whose exercise we rise continually in the scale of being—become more critical yet more catholic—stronger, wiser, and better than we were.

CHAPTER V.

PRACTICE AND REHEARSAL.

THESE words are sometimes interchanged, or used to represent the same processes. It may be convenient to distinguish them, or at least to explain the different senses in which I use them.

By *practice* I mean the careful preparation by each individual concerned in a musical performance of that which really depends on himself and himself only, the mastery of any and every passage, the incorrect or imperfect execution of which would mar the effect of the movement it formed part of. By *rehearsal* I mean the simultaneous presentation, it may be again and again, of the results of this practice. Practice therefore necessarily precedes rehearsal, and the time and pains to be bestowed on the latter will be in tolerably exact proportion

with the time and pains which have been bestowed on the former.

The process of "getting up" an opera, in a well-regulated opera-house, may serve as a model for that of getting up any piece of music or musical work requiring the co-operation of many voices or hands. In this process the line of separation between practice and rehearsal will be found very strongly marked. The "copies" of the parts are given out to the principal performers and the chorus, that they may make some acquaintance with them by solitary study, or through the aid of a master or "accompanyist." When this is supposed to have been done, each of these bodies—principals and chorus—is separately called to a rehearsal, in which only a pianoforte or a quartet of stringed instruments is employed. This rehearsal is followed by others in the course of which the performers gradually learn to dispense with their copies; for, be it remembered, operatic performers have to learn their music by heart. One or more rehearsals of the orchestral parts is always held separately; in order not only that the orchestral performers may become acquainted with them, but that errors in their copies may be ascertained and corrected. Such readiness in *reading* has now been attained by artists of this class that individual practice is rarely needed or resorted to by them. An instru-

mentalist, however, whatever his skill and experience, would certainly give private study to any solo or *obbligato* that at all taxed or brought into prominence his skill. When the principals and chorus are pretty well acquainted with their music without book, the rehearsals for "stage business" begin, and are carried on until everybody knows his or her exits and entrances, relative positions, movements hither and thither, and the like. This again is generally accompanied by a pianoforte, or at the utmost only a "skeleton band." When these several bodies—of principals, chorus, supernumeraries and band, not to speak of scene-shifters, stage carpenters, gasmen, &c. &c., are thus far in possession of their several parts, then—and not till then—a first "general rehearsal" is called, which commonly "goes" without serious hitches of any kind. A "dress rehearsal," to test scenic effect, brings to an end preparation which, conducted immethodically, might be extended over twice or thrice the time devoted to it, with less profitable result.

The preparation of a musical performance, involving the largest conceivable force available "in the house" is, as compared with that of an opera, a very simple matter. The choralists need not, though the soloists should, learn their music by heart; nor have either to group themselves here or there, do this or that, like the persons of a drama

who have to address the eyes as well as ears of their audience. They (the choralists) have their music in their hands, and having once taken their places, have simply to execute it to the best of their abilities. The quality of this execution will depend on the preparation they have made for it, and this preparation will be more agreeable and more easy in proportion to their skill in *reading*. To get up concerted music, choral or other, through the adjuvancy, or rather in spite of the obstructiveness, of people who cannot read, is frightful labour —labour, too, never certainly ended. The singer "by ear" will not only make the same mistake after it has been corrected again and again, but having avoided it nine times successively, will re-introduce it the tenth.

But in most rehearsals, even those the persons concerned in which are most competent, a great deal of time is absolutely wasted. Performers who have sung their parts correctly are made to go over them again and again, for the benefit of those who have sung *their* parts incorrectly; and even when the latter are made to practise by themselves, their practice, instead of being brought to bear exclusively on what was wrong, is allowed to include a good deal of what was right. Practice is only of use when concentrated on that which we cannot yet do. Again, time is wasted—this applies of

course to vocal rehearsals only—through the custom still general in England of attacking words and notes simultaneously. Now it would be found on careful investigation that of every choir the members of which are called upon to do this, a considerable number never even look at the notes before them at all, but trust to others more skilled and confident than themselves to guide them in their first attempts at approximate intonation. The extent to which this may be carried by singers with quick ears, and who do not like trouble, is astonishing. Nor can it be denied that they, after a time, learn to execute this or that passage or series of passages correctly. Such "learning" however is, save as regards the moment and the thing before them, absolutely sterile. Those who resort to it never improve as readers—never become in the least self-dependent.

The practice of "solfaing[1]" is the only sure remedy for this. That the association of a given syllable with a given note helps the singer to sound it correctly is at least highly probable; that nobody can associate any syllable with, or name, any note without looking at it, is certain.

[1] I speak here exclusively of solfaing with the "*fixed Do*," without or (better) with inflected syllables for altered notes. A choir fairly trained in the use of the fixed *Do* might solfa creditably, the most difficult movement of Bach's Mass in B minor, or Brahms' Requiem, while two or three practitioners of the "*movable Do*" were settling the names of the notes in the first half-dozen bars.

But there is an argument, wholly irrespective of its practical advantages, in favour of solfaing which it is certain will not be without weight with persons of taste and feeling,—that in singing or attempting to sing at sight words and notes simultaneously, the words are as likely to suffer—to be uttered incorrectly or not at all—as the notes. To what distressingly irreverent results this sometimes leads, where the words are of high import or in their expression beautiful, every choralist can bear witness.

Surely when the attainment of an object involves two processes, it is better to deal with them one at a time than at the same instant.

A few other hints and cautions on the conduct of rehearsals may not be without their use.

The appointment and employment of a conductor, a personage first seen in England only some forty years since,[1] is now so much a matter of course that it would be a work of supererogation to explain in what way he is useful in musical performance, still more in rehearsal. Nor can it be needful to do

[1] At the performances of the first German Opera Company (in 1833), to which we are indebted for the first hearing in this country of Beethoven's *Fidelio*, Madame Schroeder-Dervient filling the part of the heroine, the "conductor" was Herr Chelard. Up to this time, the duties of his office were discharged, if at all, by the principal first violin, not only in the concert-room, but the theatre. A "maestro" sat generally at the pianoforte, but he was responsible for little more than the accompaniment of recitative.

more than name some of the requisites of a good conductor, *e.g.*, large acquaintance with, and an enthusiastic love for music, considerable quickness of eye and ear, a manner authoritative yet conciliatory, patience inexhaustible, and thorough determination to carry out his own views, be they right or wrong. Given these, and a good many other qualifications, the duties of a conductor are principally two—to expose errors in rehearsal, and conceal them in performance.

But there is another personage, inseparable from the rehearsal and performance of accompanied music, and who may by his skill and tact help, or by his want of them spoil, both—the accompanyist. The duties of the accompanyist, like those of the conductor, are different at rehearsal and performance. At rehearsal his first thoughts must be of the choir, his last of himself. To make these effectual for good, he must possess two accomplishments still somewhat rare among amateurs—the power of playing from score and of transposing. The former will be almost incessantly brought into requisition in rehearsal. An accompanyist who never looks from his own pianoforte part to the vocal parts above it is sometimes not merely useless but embarrassing. Like the conductor, his eye should instantly fly to any particular part or parts in which the singers are at fault or hesitating, so that by especial

emphasis he may correct and reassure them, even when this may be incompatible with the performance of his own special work. In the practice of particular passages, the "divisions" in Handel's choruses for example, his help should consist not in playing these passages at their right pitch, but an octave higher or lower, sometimes even both. Singers often fail to hear sounds identical with or even close to those they are singing, a fact continually proved by their obtuseness to the detestable pianoforte player's trick of hitting in rapid succession particular notes which they ought to be but are not singing. The power of readily transposing a passage to a higher or lower key will prove invaluable, not only in the accompaniment of soloists but of choralists, to whom it is a great relief, towards the close of a rehearsal which has already been long and must be made longer, to fall to a slightly lower pitch. I have repeatedly rehearsed the last chorus in Handel's *Messiah*, the long and difficult "Amen" in D flat.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MUSICAL LIBRARY.

UCH time is often wasted and much disappointment created in a musical house through a very simple cause. The copy of a particular piece, for the execution of which competent performers are at hand, cannot be found. The thing is "somewhere;" it was seen "about" yesterday, when it was not wanted; the only thing certain about it now is that it is not in its place; and for the best of all reasons—that it has no place.

The keeping in order of music is certainly not easy. Its form suggests, if it does not excuse, disorder. Sheets large, often loose, of a paper tearable under the most careful handling, are difficult to "put away," so that they may readily be available for use when wanted. That this is possible, the promptness with which any particular piece is found, among the thousands of pieces in

every music warehouse, is proof positive. But a large collection of music or aught else is generally kept in better order than a small one: partly because the necessity for order in respect to it is more obvious, and partly because it suggests and justifies more minute classification. Let the same classification be applied to the small collection as to the large, and its order is assured. Such classification, however, requires some courage; for it has to be made at first at seemingly disproportionate cost.

For music of every different class, no matter how many the classes or how few the specimens of each class, have a separate portfolio. Suppose, to put an extreme case, a musical library to consist of one specimen only of each of the following kinds of pieces of music:—sonata, fantasia, dance, pianoforte duet, duet for violin and pianoforte, soprano song, contralto song, duet for two sopranos, duet for soprano and bass, trio for soprano, contralto and bass, part-song for soprano, alto, tenor and bass, quintet for two sopranos, contralto, alto, tenor and bass. Have twelve portfolios made, and letter the backs of the first "sonatas p.f."; of the second, "fantasias," and so on. Musical possessions increase at an astonishingly rapid pace. Very soon not only will the portfolios fill out and need reduplication, but new ones will be wanted for new varieties of

music: *e.g.* among instrumental, for various instruments and combinations of instruments, and among vocal—necessarily classed, "sacred and secular"—for every variety and combination of voice. Have a shelf made for these portfolios, and keep them on it in some settled order, when they are not in actual use. Binding is a process only to be recommended in particular cases,—for *sets* of pieces of the same class or by the same author. The contents of many volumes of music are absurdly heterogeneous. I had one in my possession which was made up of the following: a book of "Haydn's Canzonets," the "Battle of Prague," a full score of "Angels ever bright and fair," the "Austrian Retreat," two capriccios by Clementi, a set of sonatas by Sir George Smart, and a number of songs for all kinds of voices and in all styles, from Braham's "No more by sorrow chased," to "Mrs. Waddell was a widow."

Separate vocal parts are a sore vexation. It is difficult to conceive that anybody's time is of such small value that he should be able to spend it in keeping them in order. Happily they are in course of supersession, if they have not been superseded already by *vocal scores*, now commonly sold at a very cheap rate, and which, cheap or dear, are *books*, as easily disposed of as any other books, and which are or may be lettered at the backs. The

musical students of the present time enjoy advantages and facilities unknown to, and perhaps inconceivable by, their predecessors. Not only are well-printed copies of great works now accessible at prices lower than was once charged for a single excerpt, but among the cheapest of these are many till lately only to be seen in the British Museum or a few less easily accessible collections.

Every library has been to a certain extent a result of chance, or of circumstances over which its possessor has had no control. A house is not often furnished directly from an upholsterer's; a book-case is never filled up at once from a bookseller's. Some books come to us by inheritance, some are given to us; the purchase of others is in some way or other forced upon us, or made almost without our consciousness. So it is with music. Still there is always a considerable margin in respect both to music and books, in which we may indulge our own inclinations. I would willingly hope to have done something to turn these in the right direction, as well as to show how they may be gratified.

No musical library "can be without" some examples of musical literature. Curiosity about the lives and characters of those who have given us pleasure through their exercise of any art is natural and laudable.

Musical history, biography, and criticism have been put forth in divers tongues ; for though music is a universal language, those who have written about it have done so in languages not universal. For the most the contributors to musical literature have been German, French, Italian, or English. Neither the Italians nor the English have contributed much, save through the ephemeral and often irrecoverable "article," to the history of modern music. To that of the ancient, if not still the best, our countrymen are among the earliest contributors. Though in some respects justly impugned as authorities, Burney and Hawkins are still read and—if only for the sake of being refuted or contradicted—perhaps more often quoted than any others. On modern music the Germans are certainly the most copious and correct, and the French the most readable writers. The *Geschichte der Musik* of Ambros, and the *Musicalische Lexikon* of Koch, lately re-edited by Von Dommer, are thoroughly trustworthy, the one for the history, the other for the theory of the art. As a book of reference in musical biography no work with which I am acquainted equals the *Biographie Universelle* of Fétis — a book which, by the abundance and general accuracy of its contents, suggests rather the combined labour of the Benedictine Monastery than the work of an indi-

vidual. The articles contributed during many years to the *Revue des Deux Mondes* by the late M. Scudo, which, collected, form some eight volumes, are rich in facts and thoughts, clearly and elegantly presented. Some recent German biographies must be admitted to be exhaustive—as well of the patience of their readers as of their subjects. We may learn from them assuredly all that their heroes did, together with all that *their* contemporaries and predecessors, back to the invention of counterpoint, or even musical notation, might, could, would, or should have done. To get out of one of these sinks of indisputable but irrelevant detail needs the aid of a Frenchman, possibly perhaps not in possession of a single fact or idea to which he has not been helped by German industry or thought, but who will present the best results of both in a way that makes them delightful to read and easy to remember. But many a German book might, with advantage to the world, be rewritten by a Frenchman.

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